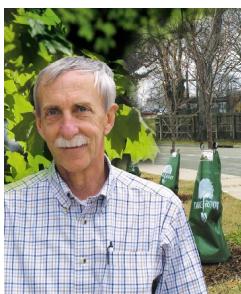


# 2015 State of the Trees Report

Department of Public Works  
Division of Urban Forestry

## 2015 – A Forester's Perspective

The year 2015 was a relatively slow year by our fast paced standards but there were still happenings worthy of note. Several slow developing projects finally gained steam and came into being: the Notable Tree Register and the Sister City Association's Commemorative Grove. Details of these two projects can be found on page 3. In March we held our annual Arbor Day celebration on the UTC campus. The Tree Commission revised its recommended Tree List for planting and



*Gene Hyde is editor of this publication.*

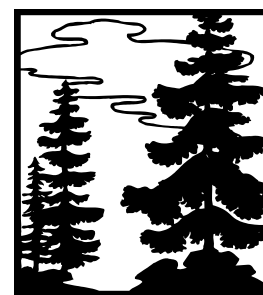
posted it on the city's Urban Forestry webpage. A new mission statement was written for the Take Root initiative to note the increasing role of education. To that end there were two basic and one advanced Citizen Forester classes taught in the fall. Tree

Commission member Mariah Prescott successfully revised the Take Root Facebook page. And the Tree Commission added a new member, Erica Lewis, to its ranks. In August the Parks Landscape section consisting of 16 employees which we inherited in May, 2014 was transferred to the newly created Parks Maintenance division. The first Timber Removal permit application in five years was processed for approval. The 30 acre site is located just off Shallowford Road. The Timber Removal ordinance was recently incorporated into the Stormwater section of City Code. And I had the opportunity to collaborate with the creators of the new Sculpture Park for the planting of trees. This facility is under development and is located in the northern section of the old Montague Park. After reading this I'm now realizing that maybe it wasn't such a slow year after all!!!



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## Arbor Day at UTC

When the Urban Forestry program was officially launched in 1990 Mayor Gene Roberts let it be known that he wanted Chattanooga to achieve the goal of becoming a Tree City, USA community. That goal was accomplished in late 1990 as well as in 24 subsequent years. The following requirements must be attained before a community can apply to the Arbor Day Foundation for Tree City Status:

1. Have a Tree Board or Department responsible for the care of its trees.
2. Have a tree care ordinance.

3. Have a tree care program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita

4. Have an Arbor Day celebration and Proclamation.

This year the 25th anniversary was marked with a special Arbor Day celebration at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Two



Overcup Oaks were planted in honor of the special relationship between UTC and the City of Chattanooga.

### Special Points of interest in 2015:

- Chattanooga was a 'Tree City' for the 25th year.
- Arbor Day was held on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.
- The backlog of Service Requests awaiting inspection is zero!

## Tree Planting in 2015

A total of 264 trees representing 24 species and varieties were planted by in-house and contract crews in 2015 as street trees. They are:

1. Yoshino Cherry	52 ea.
2. Japanese Zelkova	39 ea.
3. Various Oaks	34 ea.
4. Various Maples	32 ea.
5. Crapemyrtle	32 ea.
6. Redbud	21 ea.
7. 'Princeton' American Elm	15 ea.
8. 'Autumn Gold' Ginkgo	9 ea.
9. Goldenrain Tree	5 ea.
10. 'Bosque' Elm	5 ea.
11. Sweetgum	4ea.
12. Yellowwood	4 ea.

13. Tulip Poplar	3 ea.
14. Goldenrain Tree	3 ea.
15. Chinese Pistache	2 ea.
16. Ornamental Pear	2 ea.
17. European Linden	1 ea.
18. Eastern Dogwood	1 ea.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>264</b>

The total cost of the planting was \$26,699, including shipping at \$2,845. Most of these were replacements for trees that had died or been run over. Only 18 were planted as part of street renovations. A total of 53 new trees were planted in November, 2014 free of charge by the CSX Railroad volunteers as part of their national "Trees for Tracks" tree planting initiative. Assisting them were residents from the Southside neighborhood. Money for the purchase of these trees was provided in the form of a grant from the Alliance for Community Trees.

## Sister City's Commemorative Forest

Nearly five years ago our Sister City of Hamm, Germany approached the City of Chattanooga regarding a special request. They asked if it would be possible to create a facility in Chattanooga that would be comparable to their Wedding Forest. In Germany there is a 300 year-old tradition that newly marrieds would plant one or more trees on the occasion of their wedding. And as the couples trust and love mature and grow stronger the image of the durable, strong and steady tree fits perfectly with the idea of the marriage bond. In 1994 Hamm revived this tradition and the first tree in the modern Wedding Forest was planted.

To date over 900 trees have been planted and the donors come from 40 other German cities as well as six foreign countries including the U.S.A. In addition to honoring a marriage the project also accomplishes other goals:

1. Climate protection through the increase of forest area.
2. Community building as groups and families plant trees.
3. A location for passive recreation.

4. A place to display artwork and sculpture.

Now the Hamm Wedding Forest accepts applications for any occasion including birthdays, graduations, births, and special plantings by foreign delegations.

The search for a special site for Chattanooga's Wedding Forest was led by City Forester Gene Hyde. Numerous sites were proposed and at the end of 2015 a very special spot was chosen. The area is an open field along the Tennessee Riverwalk where the South Chickamauga Creek enters the Tennessee River. The cool idea is that the merging of two waterways is symbolic of the merging of two lives. Once the planning has been completed the Sister City Association of Chattanooga will administer the program and coordinate annual plantings.

Although there are many details left to be considered all agree that the project will prove to be a cherished feature of our community.



## Status of Service Requests

Responding to service requests is the single most time consuming and expensive aspect of our urban forestry operations. These requests pour in from a variety of sources including the 311 center, Fire and Police Departments, the Hamilton County Education Department, sister divisions within City Wide Services, and other City departments. In 2005 we switched software programs for tracking work orders. The Tree Manager software program was replaced by City Works which can be used throughout the entire Department of Public Works. In 2015 the 311 Call center records indicate that we received 804 requests as shown below and that all of them have been

inspected and closed. The three most recent years of information are provided as a basis for comparison.

	2015	2014	2013	2012
General Tree Problems	70	71	77	95
Fallen Trees and Branches	321	476	420	545
Tree Removal/Hazard	162	204	200	216
Tree Trimming	251	315	303	267
<b>Totals</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>1,066</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,123</b>

## If Trees Could Sing

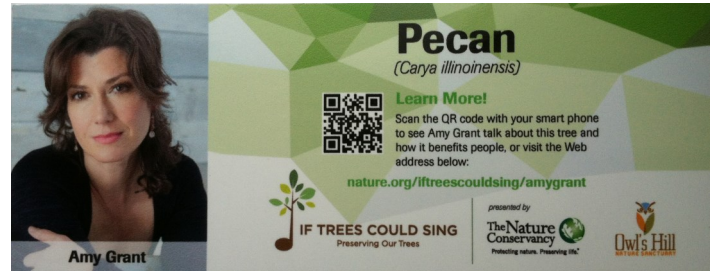
In May of 2015 City Forester Gene Hyde met with representatives of the Nature Conservancy to hear about their new initiative named, “If Trees Could Sing”. According to their website, “If Trees Could Sing is a Nature Conservancy program that brings together a diverse array of musical artists to talk about trees and their benefits for people.” And this is accomplished one tree species at a time. The Nature Conservancy was able to recruit artists to go on camera and read from a prepared script about a specific species of tree. The following is a partial list of those artists:

Amy Grant—Pecan  
Kathy Matea—Southern Magnolia  
David Olney—White Oak  
Annie Sellick—Tulip Poplar  
Reba McIntire—Pin Oak  
Rodney Adkins—Redbud  
Taylor Hicks—Sweetbay Magnolia  
The Fisk Jubilee Singers—Bald Cypress

The list would be incomplete without a few artists from the Chattanooga area. Thanks to Tree Commission member, Mariah Prescott, the following artists were filmed on-site in both Coolidge Park and downtown in October, 2015.

The Bohannons—American Elm  
Fletcher Bright—River Birch  
Dan Pinson—Ginkgo

A professional videographer was contracted to film each artist tell a story about a single species. That recording is available on plaques which are installed in parks in both Knoxville, Nashville, and soon in Chattanooga. The plaques, as shown below, have an embedded QR code and can be accessed on-site with the aid of a smartphone. The artists narrative can then be heard almost instantly.



Locations chosen for Chattanooga include Coolidge Park, the Aquarium Plaza, and Greenway Farm. A launch day and special ceremony is being planned for the spring of 2016. According to Chattanooga Tree Commission Chair, Sally Wencil, “This initiative is a perfect fit for our educational outreach goals and we are honored to partner with the Nature Conservancy to make this happen.”

## Urban Forestry in Chattanooga—25 Years in review

The modern urban forestry program was launched in 1990 when the first City Forester was hired on June 1. Gene Hyde began working with no budget, vehicles, or employees and only a vague mission. Since then the program has grown and is now recognized throughout the Southeast as an outstanding example of a startup operation. The original Tree Ordinance of 1990 which created Tree Commission and the position of City Forester has been updated several times, most recently in 2012. The Tree Commission originally had five members but now has nine. Notable events include the two state urban forestry conferences and climbing championships held in Chattanooga as well as two national conferences. During that time the program received 10 awards on the local, state and national levels. Also the Tree Commission handed out a total of 45 awards recognizing outstanding efforts of local citizens at six separate ceremonies.

Initiatives launched include the Krystal tree farm, Take Root, If Trees Could Sing, Wood Lottery, Notable Tree Register, and the Peace Grove. In twenty-five years Gene Hyde made 227 tree-related presentations in 15 states and one Canadian Province. Many storms ravaged the area including the famous blizzard of 1993, Hurricane Opal in 1995, the brutal summer storm of

2003, and the tornadoes of 2011. There have also been numerous snow and ice storms, summer thunder storms, and FEMA level floods. Chattanooga has been designated a Tree City Community for all 25 years of the program’s existence and was the first of Tennessee’s big four cities to achieve this status.

To guide the program there have been three separate management plans formulated, the most recent one in 2014. Many tens of thousands of trees have been planted through the Streetscapes, Krystal tree farm, Take Root, and the \$200K tree planting endowment grant from the State of Tennessee. These trees are catalogued on the City’s GIS system. Service requests were originally recorded on slips of paper but are now tracked through the 311 and City Works systems.

The urban forestry program was originally housed in Parks and Recreation Department but is now located in the City Wide Services Division of Public Works.

There are now three three-man crews which go out and tackle all levels of requests from simple pruning to difficult removals. Although there are still many threats to Chattanooga’s trees including invasive insects and plants the urban forestry program is robust and the future is bright.

## Chattanooga, Department of Public Works

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### Visit our website:

[http://www.chattanooga.gov/  
public-works/city-wide-  
services/urban-forestry](http://www.chattanooga.gov/public-works/city-wide-services/urban-forestry)

### Chattanooga Tree Commission Members:

Sally Wencel, Chair  
Glen Craig  
Dr. Hill Craddock  
Deborah Kendrick  
Lisa Lemza  
Erica Lewis  
Jan Pass  
Mariah Prescott, Vice Chair  
Craig Walker

### Administrator of Public Works:

Lee Norris

### Director of City-Wide Services:

Jim Templeton

The Urban Forestry program functions as a separate operation within City Wide Services. Its mission is to provide the City with a safe and attractive urban forest, and to educate citizens about the benefits and proper care of trees. It is guided by the nine-member Tree Advisory Commission as appointed by the Mayor. The Forestry Division draws on other elements within both Public Works and Parks and Recreation to assist with tree planting, solving service requests, and other missions. The program's main operating budget for FY '15-'16 of \$872,863 is derived strictly from annual appropriations.

This report is prepared annually at the request of the Tree Advisory Commission.

## Forestry and Emergency Staff

In 2015 the Urban Forestry operations were expanded to include the Emergency Department.

Listed below are the current employees in their assigned sections:

Urban Forestry:

Tree Trimmers: Wayne Pinkerton, Caleb McMillin

Equipment Operator 4: Bruce Johnson, Dexter Joshen, and Mike Compton

Crew Supervisor 2: Mike Richie, Jim Willson, and Milton Stewart

Forestry Supervisor: Jerry Mauldin

### Emergency:

The Emergency Department has the responsibility for the removal of chemical spills along roadways as well as dead animal pick-ups, litter pick-up, and discarded tires. They also are on call at night for fallen trees, pothole repair, and other mishaps that present a hazard to travelers along City streets. There is always a round-the-clock Emergency Department worker on duty every day of the year!

### Workers include:

Crew Worker 1: Johnny Williams, Johnnie Bowen, and Sean Willyerd

Equipment Operator 1: Alvin Thomas, and Eric Cox

Equipment Operator 3: Vacant

Equipment Operator 4: Pat Darr, Sherman Sales, Sherman Higdon, Brian Yates and David Lanford.

Crew Supervisor 2: Terry McCullough

